Innovative Housing Review Panel Report

To: Technical Committee

From: Innovative Housing Review Panel

David Scott Meade, Chair (member of Design Review Board) Korby Parnell, Vice Chair (member of Planning Commission)

Judd Black (member of Technical Committee) Tanika Kumar (member of Planning Commission) Sally Promer-Nichols (Chair of Design Review Board)

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Date: May 31, 2007

Project Name: Sycamore Park

Applicant: Leo Suver, Steve Burnstead Construction Company

Review Panel Recommendation:

Authorization to proceed consistent with this report and its exhibits

Project Summary: Site size:

Location: 16814 NE 122nd Street

1.6 acres

Neighborhood: North Redmond

Underlying zoning: R-4 Unit count: 12

Unit types: Single-family detached (6), single-family attached

(6), optional ADU space (4 – all associated with

single-family detached units)

Unit sizes: 1,200-2,580 square feet (ADUs ~400 square feet)¹

Summary of Important Project Components: In addition to looking at the project as a whole, the Review Panel identified several project components – discussed in more detail later in the report – that it concluded are particularly important to the project's

success under the Innovative Housing Ordinance:

Unit type mix

¹ The applicant corrected previous figures in an email to staff on May 1st.

- Pervious *woonerf*; the Panel also recommended that the applicant look into other pervious materials that may work as well or better than the proposed porous concrete
- Four-star BuiltGreen certification
- Tree retention
- Attention to community open space
- Building design
- Delineation of private and public spaces especially where homes front on the community green; this could be accomplished by providing a second walkway or low hedge to indicate the transition from private to public space.

Other Panel Recommendations:

The Panel also recommended that the applicant consider the following in moving forward:

- Greening the additional parking provided for the ADUs
- Moving homes 1-6 toward the south property line (NE 122nd St.) to enhance community open space in the center of the project, while considering right-of-way constraints
- Exploring alternative ways to provide additional affordable housing
- Providing a community amenity (e.g., barbeque, benches) to enhance the sense of community

Recommended Findings of Fact

1. Public Involvement and Notice

a. Neighborhood Meeting Date

The applicant hosted a neighborhood meeting on January 22, 2007.

b. Notice

The neighborhood meeting was advertised to property owners within 500 feet of the proposed development, on the City's website, and to those expressing an interest in North Redmond planning issues.

2. Public Comments

The Panel received oral and written testimony, both at the neighborhood meeting in January, and at the Innovative Housing Review Panel meeting on April 30th. About twelve residents attended the open house in January, and two testified at the Review Panel meeting in April. Written comments are attached as Exhibit B, and all testimony is summarized below.

* Affordability

Neighborhood meeting attendees expressed a variety of viewpoints regarding the proposed affordability components of Sycamore Park.² Some expressed that affordability was an essential component of the project and urgently needed in Redmond so as to provide homes for working families. They also expressed that the ADUs might not only serve as rental rooms, but could also be used by college-aged or young professional children unable to buy elsewhere in the area. Other neighbors were concerned that the smaller home sizes, and in particular the proposed ADUs, would attract renters who would not care for the property, and would not be respectful of neighbors.

Proposed Density/Neighborhood Fit

The proposed development would accommodate 7.5 units per gross acre in the R-4 zone. Several neighbors expressed concern that the proposed density would not fit with the existing neighborhood, and that this demonstration project could start a trend toward approving developments with more than four units per gross acre. Those testifying against the increase in density recommended cutting the number of units by half, and in so doing allow the provision of larger yards and more parking.

* Parking

Neighbors testified that allowing twelve units, plus four ADU spaces, on the 1.6-acre site would force cars to park along NE 122nd St., resulting in compromised visibility when trying to exit driveways near the property. Neighbors testified that it is already difficult to turn out of driveways onto NE 122nd due to the speed of traffic and the hillside's topography, and that adding parking along the north side of NE 122nd St. (legal or illegal) would make the situation worse.

Recommended Conclusions

1. Key Issues Discussed by the Review Panel

***** Technical Issues

Panel members wanted to ensure that the applicant had worked with City technical staff in designing the conceptual site plan since it does include unusual features such as reduced road width and pervious concrete. The applicant responded that he and members of the project team had been in contact with Fire and Public Works staff regarding road width, road surface, private utilities, and stormwater detention, and that the team continues to work with staff as the project develops.

Private vs. Public Spaces

The applicant proposes to subdivide the property and create common spaces. Panel members concluded that this could create ambiguities in public vs. private open space. Of particular

² At the time of the meeting, all understood from the applicant's submittal package that the applicant intended to offer two homes affordable to those earning 80% of countywide median income. At the April 30th meeting, the applicant stated that the submittal package contained an error, and that the applicant had intended to offer two homes at *120*%. North Redmond neighborhood regulations require the provision of homes at 80% in projects of ten or more units.

concern were the properties opening onto the central green (homes 4 and 5). Unlike homes 8 and 9, these homes do not have a pathway in front of them that serves to mark the boundary between public and private space. Panel members were concerned that the ambiguity could result in "creep" of private property accourrements into the public open space. To mitigate that possibility, the panel recommended moving homes 1-6 forward, giving consideration to right-of-way needs for NE 122nd St. and privacy needs for those fronting onto that street. The Panel also recommended placing another path or landscaping in front of homes 4 and 5 to give a clear sense of delineation between public and private. See the submitted site plan for a visual representation (part of Exhibit A).

Panel members also questioned how the community feel could be retained in light of the subdivision of the property. For example, how would fences, home colors, and other details be handled? The applicant responded that the development would have a homeowners association that would address those issues. He pointed to communities in Issaquah Highlands developed by his company whose homeowners associations prohibit fences, for example.

* Traffic

Panel members concurred with neighbors that sight lines were a valid and important safety concern, and urged the Technical Committee and technical staff to review that aspect of the proposal carefully according to City standards, and in consideration of future improvements to NE 122nd Street.

* Affordability

During the April 30th meeting, the applicant clarified that he proposes to provide one home affordable to those earning 80% of King County household median income. This was a change from what was noted in the applicant's submittal package and in the staff report. One panel member expressed serious disappointment, having felt that two homes affordable at 80% was one of the proposal's greatest assets. Another panel member remarked that the project still met the Innovative Housing Program goal of increasing affordability options because 1) the applicant will provide the required unit affordable at 80% of median income, 2) four ADUs are proposed, and 3) all of the homes would be smaller than the average size of nearby new residential construction, and, as the applicant noted to the Panel, less expensive.

Building Design

The Panel agreed that the exterior architectural finishes of each home contributed to the overall quality of the project. It concluded that high quality building design would increase appeal of the homes to residents, neighbors, and visitors. The applicant included the following architectural features in the submittal package: articulated massing, recessed garages, trim, dormers, porches, cascaded roofs, and roof awnings.

2. Recommended Staff Conclusions

The conclusions contained in the Staff Report as shown in Exhibit A should be adopted, with the correction that the applicant proposes to provide one unit affordable to those earning 80% of countywide median income.

3. Innovative Housing Review Panel Recommendation

The Review Panel adopted a motion by a vote of 4-0 to authorize the applicant to proceed with a subdivision application consistent with the applicant's description of the proposal as shown in Exhibit B to the Staff Report. The motion referenced the following elements as especially important to the project's success:

- Pervious woonerf; the Panel recommended that the applicant explore materials such as PercoCrete
- BuiltGreen 4-star certification
- Retention of identified trees in conceptual site plan
- Unit type mix as described in Exhibit A
- The provision of common open space
 - The Panel noted the delineation between private and public open space could be enhanced for homes fronting the central green by providing a second pathway or low hedge, or similar landscaping.
- Building design; the Panel concluded that this was important because it enhances the quality of life for residents, neighbors, and passers-by. Features shown in the submittal package and discussed at the April 30th meeting include articulated massing, recessed garages, trim, dormers, porches, cascaded roofs, and roof awnings.

The Panel further recommended the following actions:

- Reducing impervious surface area coverage by, for example, using grasscrete on the ends of the alleys and for ADU parking spaces
- Adjusting the locations of homes 1-6 to enhance community open space: this would depend on the ultimate location of NE 122nd Street
- Exploring alternatives for providing a second affordable home
- Providing a community amenity (e.g., barbeque, benches) in the community open space as a way to enhance the sense of community.

List of Exhibits

Exhibit A: Staff Report with Exhibits (includes Applicant Submittal Package)Exhibit B: Public CommentExhibit C: Innovative Housing Review Panel Meeting Summary, April 30, 2007	
	
Odle, Planning Director	Date
t Meade, Innovative Housing Review Panel Chair	Date
	Public Comment